

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 PRS-01 SP-02 L-01 RSC-01 /039 W

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R 232240Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5344

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 10683

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MX, CU, ESTC, CPAS

SUBJECT: PENDING PROBLEMS WITH GOM OVER U.S. RESTRICTIONS
ON TRADE WITH CUBA

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

REF: (A) MEXICO 9015 (B) MEXICO 10541 (C) MEXICO 10670

1. AT CLOSE OF AMBASSADOR'S MEETING (DECEMBER 16), WITH
SELECTED HEADS OF U.S. COMPANIES IN MEXICO, PRESIDENT OF
AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SAID HE WANTED TO CALL
AMBASSADOR'S ATTENTION TO LIKELIHOOD THAT, GIVEN GOM
MOVES TO INCREASE TRADE WITH CUBA, USG RESTRICTIONS ON
TRADE WITH CUBA BY U.S. COMPANIES IN MEXICO WOULD SOON
POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF U.S. FIRMS
IN MEXICO, AMERICAN CHAMBER ASKED AMBASSADOR TO REQUEST THE
DEPARTMENT TO BE PREPARED TO GIVE A QUICK RESPONSE
SHOULD THEY BE FACED WITH DIRECT REQUEST TO DO BUSINESS
WITH CUBA. IF U.S. FIRMS WERE TO REFUSE, SUCH A REQUEST,
THEY WOULD BE IN INTOLERABLE POSITION OF NOT ACTING AS GOOD
CORPORATE CITIZENS OF MEXICO; IF THEY ACQUIESCED, U.S.
EXECUTIVES WOULD PERSONALLY VIOLATE U.S. LAW. WHEN SPECIFIC
CASE COMES UP, EVEN IF WAY EVENTUALLY FOUND TO
ACCOMMODATE SITUATION, A DELAY OF ANY PROPORTION WOULD CAUSE
FIRM CONCERNED, AND UNITED STATES AS WELL, CONSIDERABLE
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DAMAGE.

2. AS NOTED IN REFTELS, THERE IS INCREASING PRESSURE ON U.S. FIRMS IN MEXICO TO DO BUSINESS WITH CUBA. IT SEEMS TO US THAT SOONER OR LATER, AND PROBABLY SOONER, THE GOM, WORKING WITH CUBAN OFFICIALS (SEE MEXICO 10541), IS LIKELY TO STEP UP THE PRESSURE EITHER TO EMBARRASS THE USG IN ITS CUBA POLICY OR TO MAKE A PUBLIC ISSUE OVER U.S. EXTRA-TERRITORIAL CONTROL OVER TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS. THE LATTER ALREADY SERVE AS FAVORITE WHIPPING BOYS FOR GOM. IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE ROLE OF U.S. INVESTMENT IN LATIN AMERICA IS BECOMING THE PRINCIPAL ISSUE BETWEEN U.S. AND MEXICO. THE SITUATION OF TRANSNATIONALS IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH, THE CUBA ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM LEAVES US EXTREMELY EXPOSED.

3. IN VIEW OF SPECIFIC REQUEST FROM U.S. BUSINESSES CONCERNED, EMBASSY ASKS THAT URGENT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THIS PROBLEM AND CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE PROVIDED.
JOVA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EAST WEST TRADE, POLICIES, TRADE PROMOTION, SUBSIDIARIES, BUSINESS FIRMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MEXICO10683
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740373-0496
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741215/aaaaamjh.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 74 MEXICO 9015, 74 MEXICO 10541, 74 MEXICO 10670
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 SEP 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PENDING PROBLEMS WITH GOM OVER U.S. RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE WITH CUBA
TAGS: ESTC, CPAS, MX, CU, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005